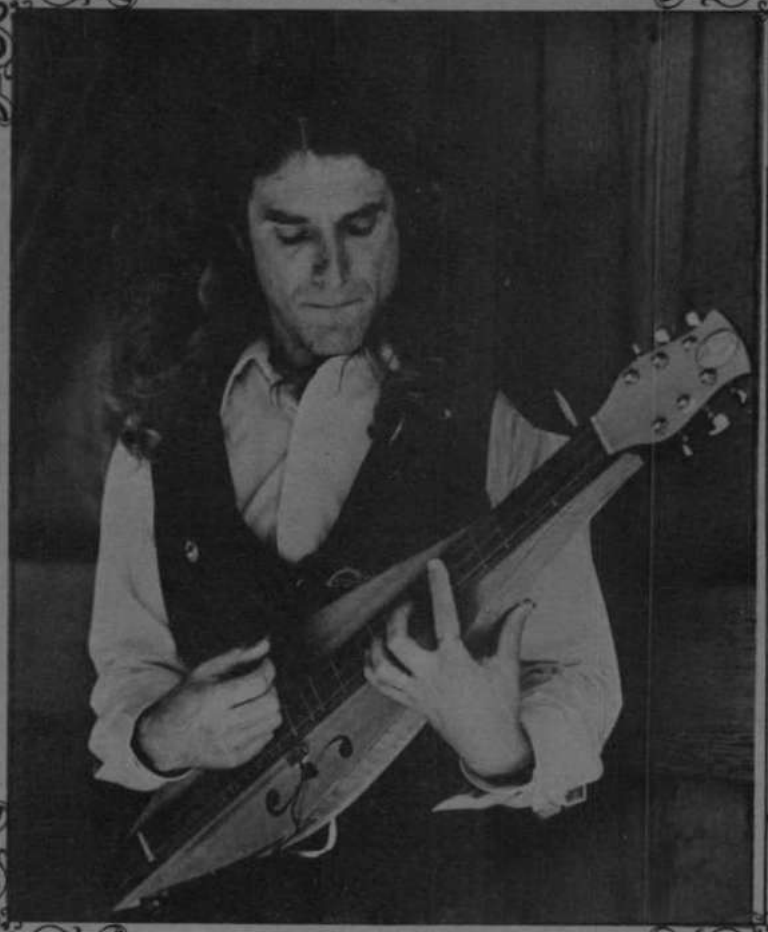
The Dulcimer Players News

People Sharing Information About Dulcimers & their Music

$1.50

Vol. 5 No. 4
Fall 1979



Neal Hellman

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CONTRIBUTING ARTIST: Michel Legaré

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Front Royal, Virginia 22630
PHONE: (703) 667-3704

The DULCIMER PLAYERS NEWS is published four times each year. Issues are mailed to subscribers during the first week of January, April, July and October. Subscriptions are $6 per year. Individual current and back issues are $1.50 each. Available back issues are listed in each DULCIMER PLAYERS NEWS.

Advertising in the DULCIMER PLAYERS NEWS is good business, for the DPN reaches several thousand hammered and mountain dulcimer folks - builders, players and enthusiasts.

OUR AD RATES ARE VERY REASONABLE.

Full Page	$45.00
Half Page	25.00
Quarter Page	13.00
Eighth Page	7.50

All advertising rates are based on camera ready black and white copy. There is an extra charge for black and white photos in your ad, as they must be screened by the printer. We will be pleased to help you with the composition of your ad.

Our copy is prepared on paper 8 1/2 by 13 inches which is then reduced by the printer to 5 1/2 by 8 1/2 inches. This must be taken into consideration when preparing your ad so the finished product will be correctly sized. We have information available to help you. Simply write and ask for it.

AD CLOSING DATES are six weeks prior to publication dates of the DULCIMER PLAYERS NEWS.

PLEASE LET OUR ADVERTISERS KNOW THAT YOU FOUND THEM THROUGH THE DULCIMER PLAYERS NEWS.

You wouldn't leave your dulcimer behind, so why leave your DULCIMER PLAYERS NEWS languishing in the wrong mailbox or in the mail sack heading back to Front Royal? TIME, TV GUIDE, PSYCHOLOGY TODAY and other magazines must know weeks in advance about a new address. You can tell us one day before the DPN goes in the mail if you must, but please tell us.

In order to have 3rd class mail forwarded you must specifically note so on the card you fill out at the local Post Office when you let them know where to forward your 1st class mail. The DPN is mailed 3rd class. If it comes back to us, we must pay the postage again, and worse luck, we don't know where to send your DPN. We have a small collection of lonely, unclaimed DPNs on a shelf. Perhaps the owners think the DPN went out of business or that we lack some responsibility. Not true! Don't forget us when your address changes, and your DPN will follow you to your new home.

I understand that department store buyers think sand, surf and sun dresses while many of us dig out from last night's snowfall. Then while we're savoring (or lamenting) a 90° July day, these same buyers think "Ski!". Right now I'm jotting this letter in my always-with-me notebook while waiting at Washington, D.C.'s National Airport for my flight to Louisville for the Kentucky Music Weekend. It's early August, but I'm planning the Fall DPN which will include some Christmas and Hanukkah songs!

What a busy Summer this has been. I visited dulcimer gatherings at Lima, Coshocton, Belle Grove, Cosby, Boone, Boulder, Binghamton and Louisville. Still to come is the September gathering in Burlington, Vermont. Unfortunately, I missed Birmingham, Lake Jacomo, Winfield, Mt. View, Bob Evans Farm, the ODPC Fun Fest and the Kindred Gathering. I took many photographs, played much music and met many fine dulcimer people. I put thousands of miles on my Toyota (it's a luxury to fly for a change). I think I have the record for dulcimer festivals attended this year - unless Alan Freeman does - and I enjoyed them all. I hope your Summer was special. Look for pictures and stories about the Summer 1979 festivals and gatherings in the Winter 1980 DPN.

A few days ago I read an article in THE WASHINGTONIAN concerning the mind-ramblings of a writer who often heard a solitary plane over Washington, D.C. at 3:52 AM. He wondered about the aircraft personnel and the passengers and their lives. He tried to personalize a sound heard late at night. The writer verbalized many of my feelings about you. As you probably know, I do most of the physical work of the DPN - typing (labels as well as copy), layout, etc. etc. I tend to be rather observant about people. When subscriptions and correspondence come in, I make out the card for the DPN file. I notice letterheads and even the designs on the checks! To me, the DPN is more than a quarterly publication containing articles and tunes. It is a publication connecting many folks, myself among them, who share a common love for the dulcimer. Some of you I'll probably never meet. But you are no less special.

I've found that handling the DPN alone is not easy. Sometimes this human computer makes mistakes that would make IBM blush. This usually occurs when subscribers receive two copies of each issue because I inadvertently typed two sets of labels or when (horrors) they receive no issue at all. Fortunately, I don't make dozens of mistakes, but because I'm a perfectionist I wish I made none at all. Sometimes I receive an irrate letter for something that wasn't my fault. The post office does lose things, copies of the DULCIMER PLAYERS NEWS among them. I have no way of knowing you didn't receive your DPN, a package or a letter unless you tell me. And every now and then something you sent didn't arrive here. Things happen and whether or not the situation was my error, the post office's error or even your error, the DPN wants to make it right. Please don't say, "Well, I guess the DPN finally folded" if you don't receive your copy. Maybe your subscription expired. Maybe you moved and didn't tell me your new address. Maybe the post office lost it. Maybe I never sent it. In any event just let me know and your situation will be taken care of immediately if not sooner.

People answering the Spring DPN reader survey differed in their feeling about music and tablatures in the DPN. Some folks wanted more music, some wanted less. This issue is lovingly dedicated to those of you who wanted more music.

Special thanks go to the artists contributing to this issue: Michel Legare, Betty Stuedle and Bill Wickman. I also appreciate the invaluable help freely given by Stuart Royalty, Ben Stone, Fred Meyer and Susan Rahimian this Summer.

Please continue to send articles and artwork, ideas, compliments and criticism and newsy letters. I appreciate them all. If you're in the neighborhood of 524 North Braddock Street, Winchester, Virginia 22601, call (703) 667-3704 and stop by if you can.

Dulcimerrily,

Maddie

Madeline MacNeil
DPN Editor

Feedback

We have a growing group of dulcimer players showing up at our gatherings at Here, Inc. the last Tuesday of each month. We start beginners, exchange tunes and tunings, generally enjoy ourselves and look out our big windows across the Mississippi River to the sparkling lights of downtown Minneapolis. We have such a fine location on the 3rd floor of an old brick warehouse with a large retail shop which we use every now and then for jam sessions and guest performances (Susan Boyer Haley, Margaret MacArthur, John McCutcheon and Wry Straw). Just recently our good sound (wood floors and ceilings) has been discovered by local folks who interview and record there for National Public Radio shows.

We welcome dulcimer folk and friends to Here, Inc. and the Twin Cities which are full of all kinds of music and arts generally. Just some of the places where you can often hear folk musicians: Cafe Extempore, Cedar-Riverside Cafe, Whole Cup Coffeehouse, Walker Art Center, even the Guthrie Theatre and Orchestra Hall for the likes of Pete Seegar. There is also Walker Church and radio shows on a new station called Fresh Air Radio plus Garrison Keillor's live radio show on Saturday afternoons.

Len and Su MacEachron
Here, Inc.
29 S.E. Main Street
Minneapolis, MN 55414

Several years ago I had a letter in DPN suggesting continuous cycle cassettes (Lafayette Radio) as a worthy consideration for those practicing music playing along. There is now a cassette recorder (CTR-47) at Radio Shack which has two counters and a continuous recycle option. As a square and round dance caller and teacher and amateur country musician, I find it suits my purposes admirably. There are, however, some problems with the AGC during quiet times. I have procedures to overcome these and would be happy to pass them on to anyone who inquires.

B. O. Lowery
1 Lopez Lane
Key West, FL 33040

Sears and Roebuck listed hammer dulcimers in their 1902 catalog (you can buy reprints in bookstores). They cost $13.85 and were described as "Chromatically strung, can be tuned so as to play easily in all keys." The small engraving shows what appears to be a 12-treble, 11-bass instrument, so its range must have been very limited in chromatic tuning.

A pair of dulcimer "beaters" was included, and also were sold separately. Unfortunately the page showing the "beaters" was not reprinted.

The $13.85 price wasn't cheap. Sears sold Autoharps for $1.75 and up, guitars for $2.45 and up, violins started at $2.45 and banjos at $1.75. You could buy a harmonica for 7¢. No mountain dulcimers are listed.

Floyd Ellington
Charlotte, NC

STOLEN DULCIMERS Please Help

The following instruments were taken from our home on April 14th. If you see any of them, please call us collect at (617) 782-4195. Joanie Bronfman, Neal MacMillan Boston, Mass.

Dulcimer made by Tam Kearney July 7, 1978 in brown case with green lining.

Walnut dulcimer made by Leonard Glen. The instrument has the extra fret put in at an angle and a broken peg replaced with an ebony fiddle peg. The dulcimer is in a pine case with red, white and blue lining.

The following instruments were stolen during July, 1979.

Mt. dulcimer, 4 string hourglass walnut model 121-S, no. 259
Mt. dulcimer, 4 string hourglass spruce/walnut model 111, no. 222
Mt. dulcimer, 3 string hourglass spruce/rosewood model 41-SR, no. 278
Hammer dulcimer 12T, 11B 46 strings spruce/maple/walnut/amaranth HD210
Hammer dulcimer 12T, 11B 46 strings spruce/maple/walnut HD215

All of these instruments are labeled Shady Grove Dulcimer Co., Branson, Missouri. There will be an ample reward for safe return of any instruments and a sizeable reward for information which leads to arrest and conviction of the culprits. Contact: Shady Grove Dulcimers, P.O. Box 522, Branson, Missouri 65616 (417) 334-0488 or the Taney County Sheriff, Forsyth, Missouri 65653 (417) 546-2191

what's new?

what's new?

what's new?

what's new?

There are several "almost here" dulcimer books and records which should be available in the next few weeks. Rather than mention something now and later find the book or record delayed by all the unforseen events that usually happen, we will wait. Many capable dulcimer players are sharing their creative efforts, adding immeasurably to the available materials for dulcimer enthusiasts. Please make the DPN aware of dulcimer books and records you discover.

EASY CHORD PLAYING METHOD FOR HAMMERED DULCIMER
AUTHOR: Lilah Gillett

Lilah Gillett devised this 5 page booklet from material used with her hammered dulcimer students. Ideas and exercises are given for back-up playing and for solo embellishments. In addition, color-coded strips using note names and numbers are included for the treble and bass bridges of the student's instrument - an easy, graphic way of learning to play. Four simple tunes ("Red River Valley", "Down in the Valley", "You Are My Sunshine" and "Aunt Rhody") are included for practice. Address for Lilah Gillett is 8709 Goddard, Overland Park, Kansas 66214.

CHRISTMAS AND EASTER HYMNS ARRANGED FOR APPALACHIAN DULCIMER
AUTHORS: Mark and Carol Blair
PUBLISHER: Communications Press (American Music Series)
ISBN: 0-98461-005-8

This is the second book for Mark and Carol Blair, the first being BEST LOVED HYMNS ARRANGED FOR APPALACHIAN DULCIMER. Notation and tablature are included for 25 hymns such as "Silent Night", "We Three Kings of Orient Are", "O Come All Ye Faithful", "Welcome Happy Morning", "He Lives" and "Christ the Lord is Risen Today". Both Mark and Carol have sung in church choirs for years and in their book provide chordal arrangements reminiscent of Christmas and Easter mornings singing with joyful church congregations.

FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN
ARTISTS: Wry Straw (John McCutcheon, Rich Kirby, Tom Bledsoe)
LABEL: June Appal JA-028

The three young folks who make up Wry Straw have been in the thick of the mountain music scene for years. John McCutcheon, Tom Bledsoe and Rich Kirby are from Scott County, Virginia, an area in the southwestern tip of the state that has produced popular country performers like the Carter Family, the Fiddlin' Powers Family and Ralph Stanley. Wry Straw's music covers a broad cross-section of many styles of mountain music, including fiddle and banjo, ballads, white and black string band tunes, old-time gospel music, ragtime, children's material, shape-note songs, mountain blues, topical songs, Irish pieces and Carter Family music. The band is comfortable with just about all the instruments of old-time music - lap dulcimer, fiddle, banjo, guitar, mandolin, autoharp, jaw harp and hammered dulcimer, and they are all represented on the album. Tunes include: "Where the Soul Never Dies", "I Get the Blues", "Magpie"/"Leather Britches", "Dill Pickle Rag" and "Morgan Megan".

A HARVEST OF DULCIMERS
ARTISTS: Dick and Anne Albin
LABEL: Mr. Chocolate Mess Music

Dick and Anne Albin live in Powell County, Kentucky and specialize in mountain music. The songs they sing come from friends they've met in their travels over Kentucky, Missouri, Arkansas and West Virginia and from other musicians and collectors. They also write many of their own songs and three of them are included on A HARVEST OF DULCIMERS. Instruments other than the mountain dulcimer played on the album are banjo, jaw harp and guitar. Songs include: "Walk on the Path", "Shady Grove", "Johnson Boys", "Big Tom's Homemade Dandelion Wine", "The Wagoner's Lad" and "Wild Mountain Thyme". Address for Mr. Chocolate Mess Music is P.O. Box 271, Stanton, Kentucky 40380.

CONTINUED

what's new?

what's new?

THE DOBBS BROTHERS AND MARY FAITH RHOADS
ARTISTS: Joe Dobbs, Dennis Dobbs, Mary Faith Rhoads
LABEL: Fret 'n Fiddle 10001

The Dobbs brothers were born and reared in north Louisiana. Mary Faith is a native of Center Valley, Pennsylvania. It was mountain music and West Virginia that brought them together at the West Virginia State Folk Festival in Glenville. Joe played professional bluegrass and Texas Swing fiddle in the Southwest before moving to West Virginia in 1967. Dennis grew up playing electric guitar, but a single visit to West Virginia convinced him that the mountains of Appalachia were where it was happening in music. Mary Faith immersed herself in traditional music in 1963. She is known in Europe and the Brittish Isles as well as she is known in North America. The album presents a sampler of their music. Mary Faith's principal instrument is the hammered dulcimer. On some of the cuts, including "Over the Waterfall" and "Arkansas Traveler" she plays mountain dulcimer. Other cuts include "Fishers Hornpipe"/"Ricketts Hornpipe"/"Whiskey Before Breakfast", "Red Wing", "St. Anne's Reel" and "Flowers of Edinburgh". Address for Fret 'n Fiddle is 524 14th Street West, Huntington, West Virginia 25704.

MOVIN' ON DOWN THE RIVER
ARTIST: Cathy Barton
LABEL: Biscuit City 1325

Cathy Barton has spent most of her life in Columbia, Missouri, a college town located not more than seven miles from the ambling muddy Missouri River. Some of the songs on her album portray rivers in various moods, such as "Roll On, Weary River" and Jean Ritchie's "Movin' On Down the River". Other tunes and songs are her favorites, such as "Marmaduke's Hornpipe"/ "Gonna Go Hunting for the Buffalo"/"Salty River Reel", Childgrove", "Ae Fond Kiss" and "Music Alone Shall Live". Cathy is a gifted musician, equally at home playing the hammered dulcimer, banjo and guitar. Other musicians on the album playing guitar, fiddle and bass are Dave Para, John Murdoch, Ramona Jones and Jay Round.

PIGTOWN FLING Dulcimer Sessions
ARTISTS: Leo Kretzner and Jay Leibovitz
LABEL: Green Linnet SIF 1019

Leo Kretzner and Jay Leibovitz are extraordinary midwestern dulcimer players who have integrated the mountain dulcimer into the mainstream revival of old-time string band music. They play reels, jigs, hornpipes and breakdowns with a dymanic virtuosity usually associated with banjo, fiddle, mandolin or guitar. In the Summer of 1978, Leo and Jay along with some Ann Arbor, Michigan musicians played and taped music for two days. The highlights of that session provide the material for PIGTOWN FLING. Other musicians are Bill Meyer (fiddle, banjo), Robin Lewis (guitar), Ellen Jacobs (fiddle), Dave Cahn (fiddle, banjo, mandolin), Craig Johnson (guitar), Vinnie Tufo (fiddle) and Dave Orlin (banjo, concertina). Selections include "Sandy River Belle", "Spotted Pony", "Forked Deer", Pigtown Fling", "Old Mother Flannigan", "Fisher's Hornpipe"/"Rickett's Hornpipe", "Big Scioto" and "Bonaparte Crossing the Rhine".

Rhode Island, a state rich in ethnic, regional and occupational traditions, will be the site of a state-wide folklife project undertaken by the American Folklife Center in the Library of Congress. The project will bring a team of professional folklorists into the state to record, photograph and analyze a wide range of folk cultural activities.

The first phase of the project began August 1st and will continue through December 31, 1979. It will focus on the collection of resource materials and field data, including notes, photographs, and tape recordings and the assessment of current cultural programs and activities. It will start with a field survey by a six-member team who will spend two months in Rhode Island, locating and documenting a broad range of traditions. The folklorists and other cultural specialists who participate in the project will survey the lives and work of boatbuilders, farmers, millworkers, storytellers, and musicians, and will document a full spectrum of ethnic and regional activities including family traditions, religious festivals, traditional foodways, and artistic talents and skills.

Such a cooperative project, never before undertaken by so many agencies of a state, may serve as a pilot study for future state-wide or regional projects in other parts of the nation. The body of materials gathered during the survey will be housed at the Library of Congress where it will be available for use by researchers and the general public. A complete reference archive will also be established at the Rhode Island Historical Society.

Headquarters of the project will be the Rhode Island Heritage Commission, 150 Benefit Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02903 (401) 277-2669.

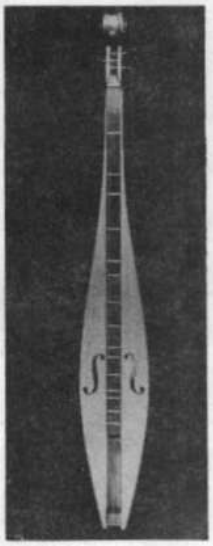
BEN WADE
Goodlettsville,
Tennessee

MORE DULCIMER WORKSHOPS AND GROUP LESSONS

OHIO (Akron-Canton area)
Boulder Junction
P.O. Box 471
13890 Cleveland Ave.
Uniontown, Ohio 44685
Phone: 699-9391
Free workshop every
Thursday 7:00-7:30
Teacher: Deege Behanna
This is in conjunction with Boulder Junction's Free Music Night every Thursday. Dulcimer players are invited to stay afterward for Old-Time jam sessions.

MASSACHUSETTS (Boston area)
Belmont Music School
512A Pleasant Street
Belmont, Mass. 02178
Phone: 484-4696, 489-2559
Classes offered for beginner to advanced in Appalachian dulcimer. There is a series of 15 lessons each semester.
Children $60, Adults $70
Teacher: Lucy Joan Sollogub

· DULCIMERS
· KITS
· MOUTHBOWS



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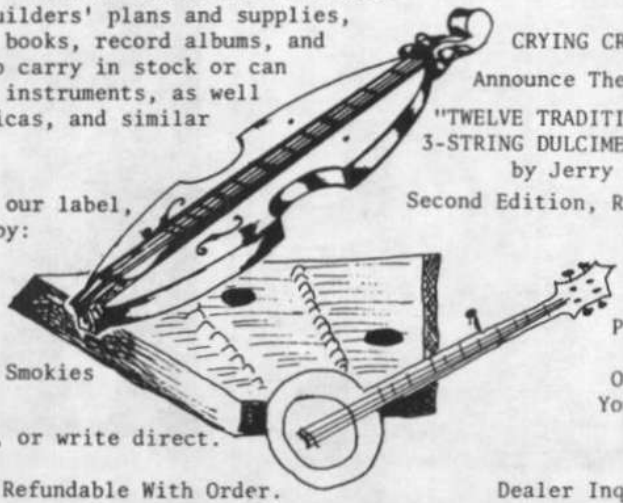

Jeananlee Schilling

Through

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DRONE ON MY KNEE

Music and Lyrics by Richard Dunaiff
Arranged by Madeline MacNeil

TUNE: Do Sol Sol
Ionian DAA

It don't make my foot tap, If it sits on your lap, You've
Well, if two of you play, It just ruins my whole day, I keep

one too few strings to make mu- sic. I can't stand all that
lis-tening for notes and hear drone. So you've guessed what I'm

drone, why don't you folks go home, and let us pluck- ers and pick-ers make
doing, I'll just keep on re- tuning 'till you break all your strings and go

mu- sic!
home!

Well, I've played your gui- tars, your har- mon- i-

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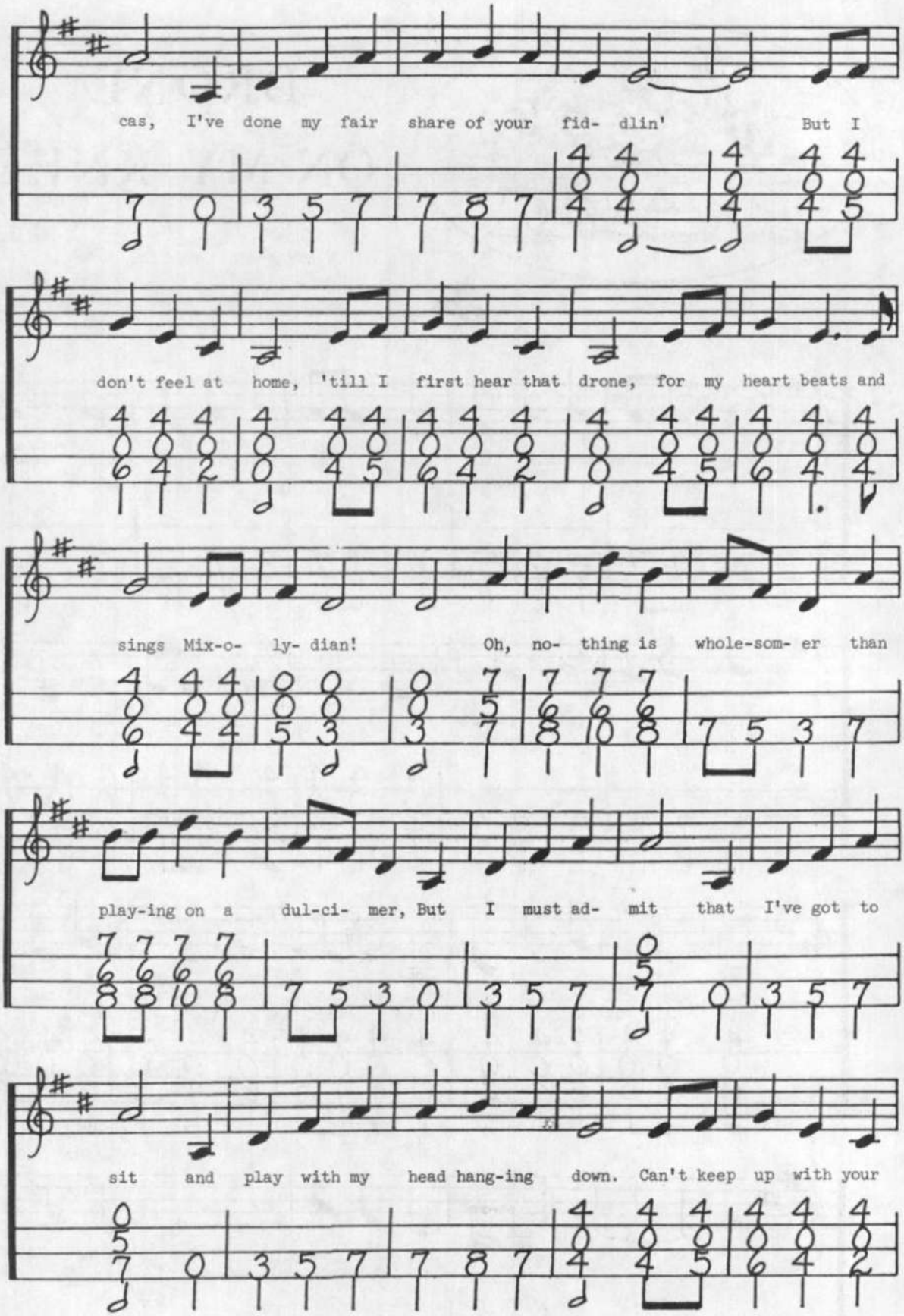
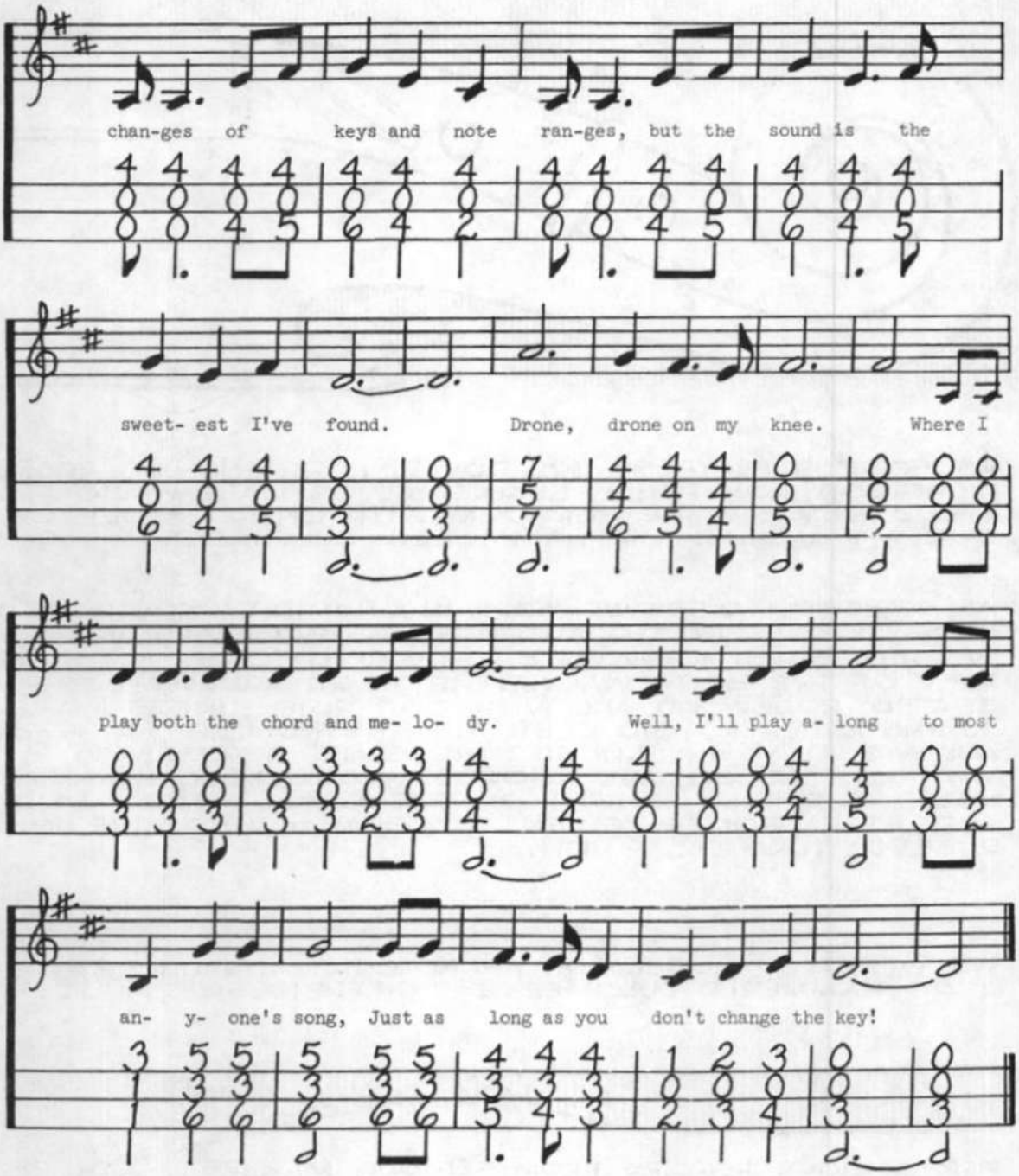
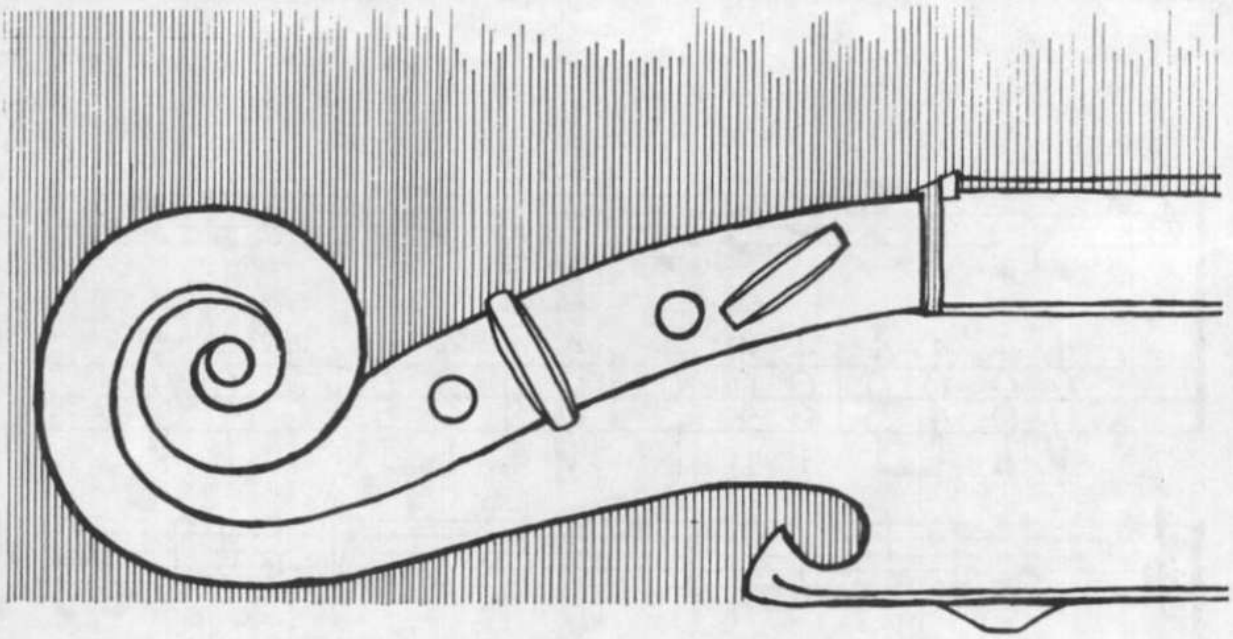

cas, I've done my fair share of your fid- dlin' But I
don't feel at home, 'till I first hear that drone, for my heart beats and
sings Mix-o- ly- dian! Oh, no- thing is whole-som- er than
play-ing on a dul-ci- mer, But I must ad- mit that I've got to
sit and play with my head hang-ing down. Can't keep up with your



I learned "Drone on my Knee" from Bonnie Carol after hearing it at the Cosby Gathering in June, 1977. Since then I have sung it numerous times at dulcimer gatherings and festivals and have promised countless people that I would write down Richard Dunaiff's marvelous song with his permission. Richard currently lives in Boulder, Colorado, and I understand that he has written several fine songs. "Drone on my Knee" is strummed throughout, unless you feel like using a combination of picking and strumming (that's how I play it). The tempo is moderate. Our thanks go to Richard for sharing his song.



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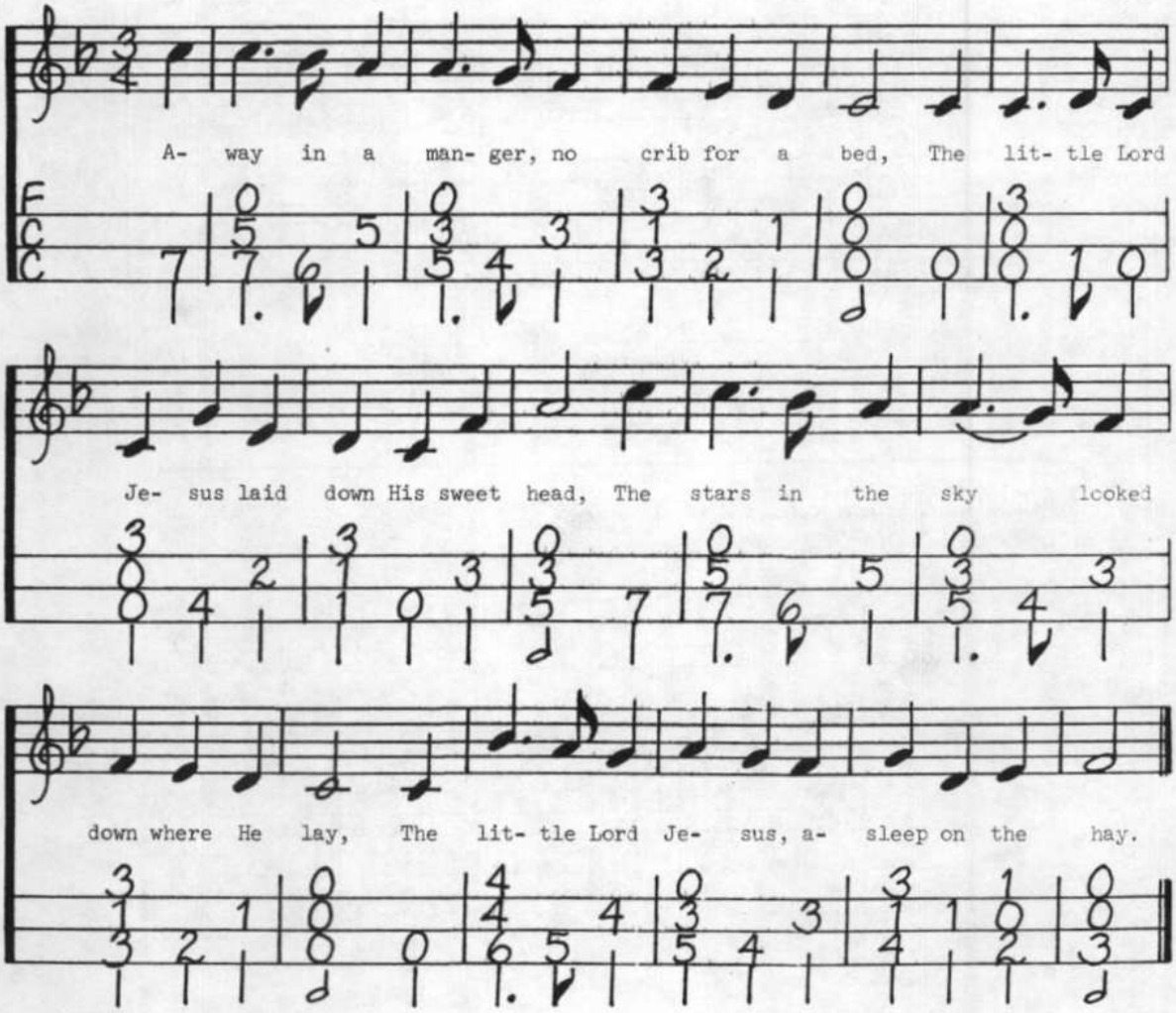
Away in a Manger

Anonymous
Tune: Do Sol Sol
Ionian Key of F

J. R. Murray, 1877
Arranged by PAMELA BOZZI



Pamela Bozzi
Gaithersburg, MD

The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

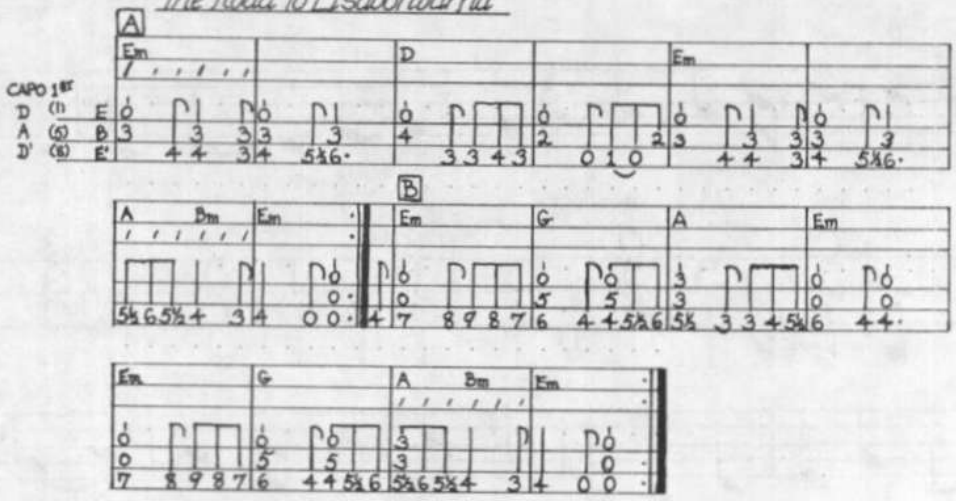
Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And fit us for Heaven to live with Thee there.

CAPOING THE DULCIMER

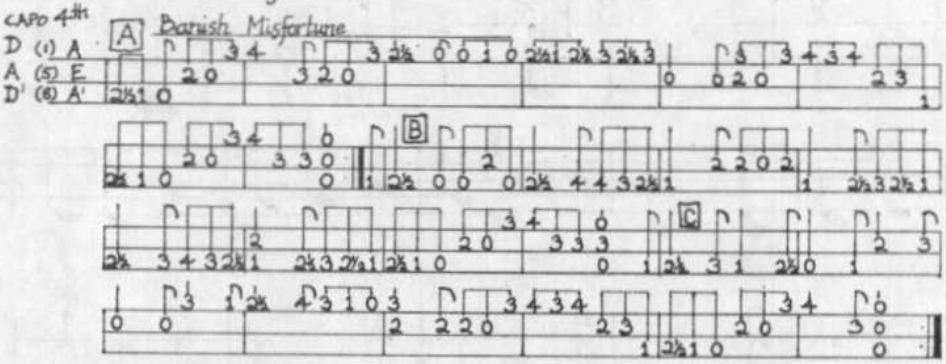
-by- Jerry Rockwell

Tuning D-A-D Capo 1st fret - our "open" strings are now E-B-E. Although other modes are possible, I use this particular tuning-and-capo set-up for the *Dorian Mode* of E. From the "open string" E to the 7th* fret octave, including the extra fret,** we have E Dorian happenning on the first and third strings. On the middle string we have the E Dorian from the 3rd to the 10th fret - excluding the extra fret.***

The Road To Lisdoonvarna



Tuning D-A-D Capo 4th fret - our "open" strings are now A-E-A. The mode used here is *A Mixolydian*.



* count the capoed fret as 0

** and excluding the 5th fret

*** and including the 5th fret

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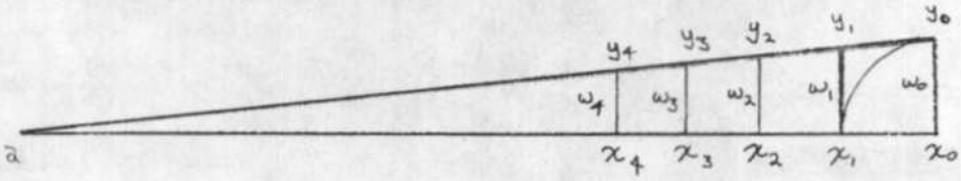
Equal Tempered Chromatic Fret Measurements

...dan rich

I suspect that there are a small number of dulcimer people who are curious about the mathematical underpinnings of fret placement formulas. What I'd like to do here is show how another programmer and I were able to derive a family of mathematical formulas including the so-called 'Equal Tempered' formula using the geometrical model from Howie Mitchell's booklet and some basic knowledge of harmonics.* I'm going to talk only about chromatic fret formulas. Dulcimer makers, of course, know that some chromatic frets are omitted from a dulcimer's keyboard.

We make two assumptions: 1) at exactly the midpoint of a string we get an octave fret 2) we will start with a large fret space and make each succeeding space smaller in the same way so that the 12th one will land exactly in the middle of the string. The way we make these spaces smaller is geometrically described in great detail by Howie. Briefly, we construct a right triangle whose legs are related by a specific proportion so that one leg is string length and the other the 1st fret. Successive frets are found by arcing the shorter leg of the triangle onto the longer leg and constructing a perpendicular at that point. My article will show how that crucial proportion is derived.



not to scale

Our objective is to find a mathematical expression for the ratio between the two legs of our triangle based on the fact that x_{12} must be the midpoint of $\overline{ax_0}$. The leg $\overline{ax_0}$ is string length and the leg $\overline{y_0x_0}$ is the length from the nut to the first fret.

$$x_1 = x_0 - w_0 \qquad x_2 = x_1 - w_1 \quad . \; . \; . \quad x_n = x_{n-1} - w_{n-1}$$

a little factoring yields:

$$x_1 = x_0\,(1 - w_0/x_0) \qquad x_2 = x_1\,(1 - w_1/x_1) \; \ldots \quad x_n = x_{n-1}\,\left(1 - (w_{n-1}/x_{n-1})\right)$$

I

since we have similar triangles $\triangle ax_0y_0 \;\; \triangle ax_1y_1 \;\; . \; . \; . \;\; \triangle ax_ny_n$

we know that: $\quad w_0/x_0 = w_1/x_1 = \; . \; . \; . \; = w_n/x_n \qquad$ therefore-

$$x_2 = x_1\,(1 - w_0/x_0) \qquad x_3 = x_2\,(1 - w_0/x_0) \; \ldots \; x_{n+1} = x_n\,(1 - w_0/x_0)$$

II III IV

---

* Howard W. Mitchell THE MOUNTAIN DULCIMER, How to Make It and Play It (After a Fashion) Folk-Legacy Records FSI-29

For information on harmonics, see DPN vol. 4, no. 4 (Autumn 1978) article written by Jerry Rockwell

substituting the results of equation I into equations II, III, IV we get-

$$x_2 = x_0\,(1 - w_0/x_0)(1 - w_0/x_0) = x_0\,(1 - w_0/x_0)^2$$

$$x_3 = x_0\,(1 - w_0/x_0)^3 \;\ldots\; x_n = x_0\,(1 - w_0/x_0)^n$$

now, since x_{12} has to be the midpoint of $\overline{ax_0}$ it must be true that $x_{12} = x_0/2$

and we have shown that: $x_{12} = x_0\,(1 - w_0/x_0)^{12}$

so: $x_0/2 = x_0\,(1 - w_0/x_0)^{12}$

since our objective is to find the ratio $w_0 : x_0$ we can assume $w_0 = 1$ and procede to solve for x_0

$$x_0/2 = x_0\,(1 - 1/x_0)^{12}$$

$$1/2 = (1 - 1/x_0)^{12}$$

$$(1/2)^{1/12} = 1 - 1/x_0$$

$$1 - (1/2)^{1/12} = 1/x_0$$

$$1/\left[1 - (1/2)^{1/12}\right] = x_0$$

$$17.81715374 \cong x_0$$

The important ideas are finished but we can still come up with an expression which is easier to use for fret placement calculations. We have shown that:

$$x_n = x_0\,(1 - w_0/x_0)^n \qquad \text{V}$$

Also we know that if $w_0 = 1$ then $x_0 = \dfrac{1}{1 - \sqrt[12]{1/2}}$

substituting these results into equation V and turning the algebra crank we get a useful tool:

$$x_n = x_0\left(\sqrt[12]{1/2}\right)^n \qquad \text{VI}$$

x_n - distance from bridge to fret n

x_0 - string length

n - fret number

CONTINUED

I'm interested to know if other hammered dulcimer makers color code the scales. I mark mine with opaque colors on the left and right sides of the treble bridge and also on the inside of the bass bridge. I find them a great help. The octaves have matched colors, which helps with the tuning.

Paul L. Lyle
7017 Larchmont Drive
No. Highlands, CA 95660

Letting z_n equal the distance from fret n tothe nut, it is easy to see that $z_n = x_o - x_n$ and that $x_n = x_o - z_n$. Substituting for x_n in equation VI and turning the crank one last time we get the even more useful formula:

$$z_n = x_o \left[1 - \left(\sqrt[12]{1/2}\right)^N\right]$$

This expression will be most instrument maker's bottom line because it is most practical to set up a fretboard by measuring from the nut rather than the bridge.

It is important to note that these placements for frets are workable but your bridge must still be set by ear as described by Woody Padgett in the DPN vol 2 no. 4 fall 1976. Hank Levin in Jean Ritchie's book Dulcimer People uses the same approach.

Also it is interesting to note that this is not the only way to analyze the problem quantitatively. I spoke of a family of formulas at the outset. To this point we have found the first member of this family - equation VI. This is the 'Equal Tempered' formula used in construction of guitars, banjos, mandolins, dulcimers, etc. Two other members of the family are equations VII & VIII. Observing that chromatic fret no. 7 divides a string into 1/3, 2/3 segments at harmonic partial 3 yields the expression:

$$\text{VII} \qquad x_n = x_0\left(\sqrt[7]{3/3}\right)^n \qquad \text{\& ratio } 1:17.76895093$$

Likewise harmonic partial 4 at fret no. 5 divides the string 1/4, 3/4 producing

$$\text{VIII} \qquad x_n = x_0\left(\sqrt[5]{3/4}\right)^n \qquad \text{\& ratio } 1:17.88509192$$

I have never used these last two formulas to build an instrument and therefore don't know what they sound like, but they are close enough to be interesting. Also, when making a dulcimer, Simon Spalding's arguments for 'just intonation' deserve some consideration. (DPN vol. 2, no. 4 Fall 1976).

Using even a four function calculator and equation VI you can find your own fret specs, if you know that the 12th root of 1/2 is 0.9438743127. If, however, you do not feel confident of the math or would like to see a computer generated listing from either equation VI, VII or VIII, send me the string length, calculation method, stamped self-addressed envelope and 50¢ per listing.

Dan Rich
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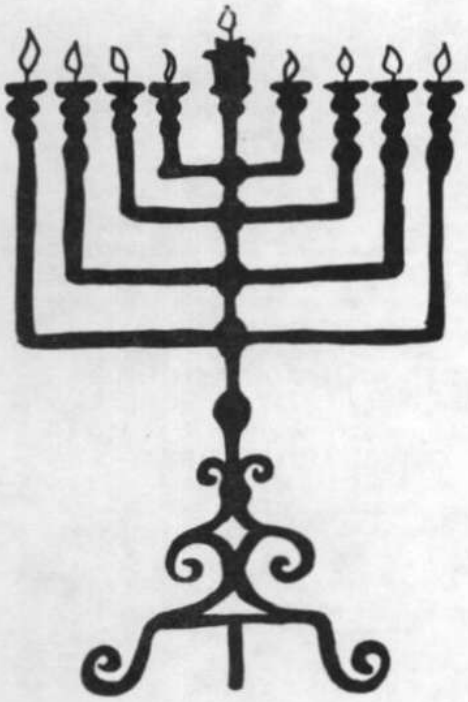
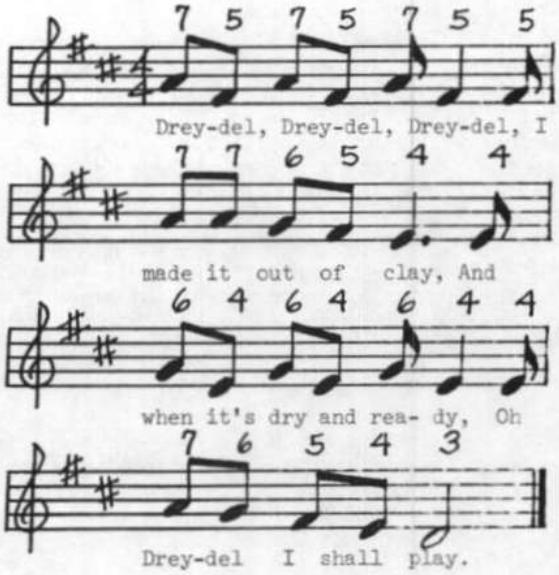
dreydel

Traditional
Submitted by: LORRAINE LEE

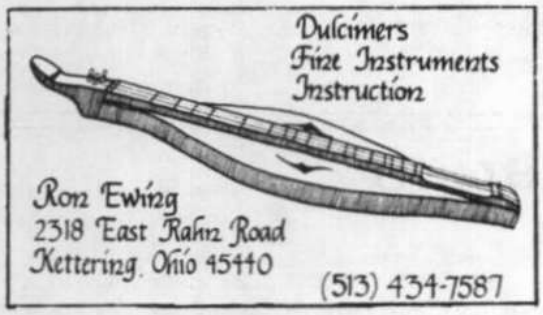
Tune: Do Sol Sol
D A A Ionian





2. It has a lovely body
With leg so short and thin,
And when it is all tired
It drops and then I win.

The dreydel, a spinning top with numbers on it, is used for games similar to "Put and Take". Jewish families traditionally play with the dreydel during the holidays.



notes

A file is underway listing dulcimer players and makers by state. When someone requests the name of a dulcimer person in a particular area, this file will facilitate our finding someone. The DPN feels great responsibility toward our mailing list, that we should have permission before releasing anyone's name and address. Therefore, only folks who granted that permission on the survey in the Spring 1979 DPN will be in the special file. Some of you filled out the survey, but neglected to answer yes or no about releasing your name and address. (The question was a little burried at the end. Sorry.) If you want to be in the file or if you feel you didn't answer the question on the survey, please send us a card (that would be easier to handle than a letter) telling us your name and address, your telephone number (if we may pass it along) and whether your main interest is the hammered or mountain dulcimer or both. It would also help if you tell us if you teach dulcimer lessons and if you build instruments for sale.

As you probably know, the DULCIMER PLAYERS NEWS is growing. As you probably know, inflation is growing also. The DULCIMER PLAYERS NEWS is now at a curious place: more help is needed with the construction of the magazine, yet there isn't enough money to hire a full time assistant. This issue was typed and put together by one person (me). It took me an entire day to write out "Drone on my Knee". Of course, not all of the articles and songs took that long, but you can imagine that a lot of time and effort went into the production. At the same time, I spent many hours at my desk processing subscriptions, filling orders, trying to answer some letters and attempted to find time to perform a little. By the Winter issue I'd like to have some help. Perhaps someone in the area would be interested in spending 2 or 3 days in Winchester helping out every 3 months. Salary is negotiable. Since I love to barter, perhaps we could exchange work for lessons and/or books and records. I need a typist. Speed isn't a serious factor, but accuracy is. Legible handwriting certainly helps. Someone who has a little artistic ability would be too much to hope for! The work space isn't the best (sharing a table with many facets of the DPN operation), but I've collected some nice rulers, press type and pens over the past few months. The food is vegetarian. If you're interested, talk with me. Phone: (703) 667-3704 Address: 524 North Braddock Street, Winchester, Virginia 22601.

Correspondence sent to the DULCIMER PLAYERS NEWS will reach me sooner if you use this address: 524 North Braddock Street, Winchester, Virginia 22601.

HAMMERED DULCIMER PLAYERS AND BUILDERS: The DULCIMER PLAYERS NEWS would especially like to hear from you. (Are you alive out there?)

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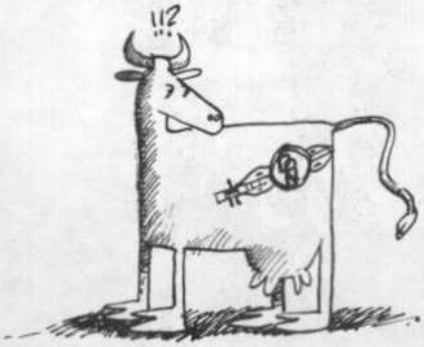

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Vol. 1, No. 6 (Sept-Oct 1975)	Vol. 3, No. 4 (Fall 1977)
Vol. 1, No. 7 (Nov-Dec 1975)	Vol. 4, No. 1 (Winter 1978)
Vol. 2, No. 1 (Winter 1976)	Vol. 4, No. 2 (Spring 1978)
Vol. 2, No. 3 (Summer 1976)	Vol. 4, No. 3 (Summer 1978)
Vol. 2, No. 4 (Fall 1976)	Vol. 4, No. 4 (Fall 1978)
Vol. 3, No. 1 (Winter 1977)	Vol. 5, No. 1 (Winter 1979)
Vol. 3, No. 2 (Spring 1977)	Vol. 5, No. 2 (Spring 1979)
Vol. 3, No. 3 (Summer 1977)	Vol. 5, No. 3 (Summer 1979)

in the Shop

HD hammers

When I first began playing the hammered dulcimer, I found my playing to be lifeless and bland, lacking the power and fluidity of sound that first attracted me to the instrument. After much thought, I decided the hammers might be at fault and not me. The hammers I received with my dulcimer were ten inches long, very light and slightly springy. I made a pair of solid cherry hammers about seven inches long, since this was the length of wood available at the time. The new hammers were stiffer and a little heavier. The magic that occurred when I first played with them still happens each time I use them. My accuracy, ornamentation and speed increased immediately. The right hammers gave me the connection I desired with my instrument.

You may enjoy making your own hammers. No matter how light or stiff you want them, make the shaft much longer than you intend it to be on the finished hammer. Play your dulcimer, holding the hammer shafts at different points until you find the best place to hold them (where they respond best and feel most comfortable). Then you can glue on ears to make a grip and cut the shaft to its proper length.

The tools needed for carving hammers are easily obtained at any hardware store. I recommend:

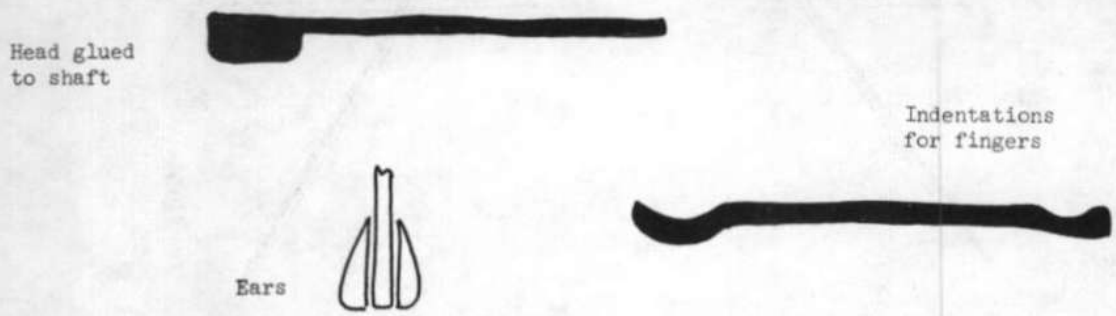
1. a coping saw for cutting the basic shape of the hammer from rough stock.
2. a small wood file and/or rasp for shaping the hammer.
3. a pocket knife which, actually, can do the whole job. It's great for scraping and balancing the hammers.
4. one or two small C clamps are helpful for clamping wood to a table top while using the coping saw, for gluing on ears for make handles, etc.

I usually finish my hammers with a penetrating oil. Hammers are very light and delicate and can easily warp. As for wood, I've used everything from Brazilian rosewood to orange crates (a rare hardwood found on the streets of New York City), all with good results.

I've purposely avoided giving dimensions and precise directions since hammers must work for each individual. The following illustrations, however, may serve as a point of departure.

Be brave and have fun.

Doug Berch
1685 East 5th Street
Brooklyn, New York 11230



in the Shop

hitch pins

Figures A, B and C are shortened diagrams for setting up the general angle of hammered dulcimer hitch pins and tuning pins on their respective blocks. A builder's major concern is having an equal separation between strings within a course of strings. Figures A and B work well. Figure C shows what happens when the side taking up the string on the tuning pin is not taken into consideration. The builder ends up with uneven separations between the strings because the string coming off one pin hits another pin before going to the other side of the instrument. Figures A and B allow the builder to decrease the space between the strings in a course as much as desired.

Eddie Damm
Great Lakes Dulcimers
8 Summer Street
Bar Harbor, Maine 04609

Fig. A

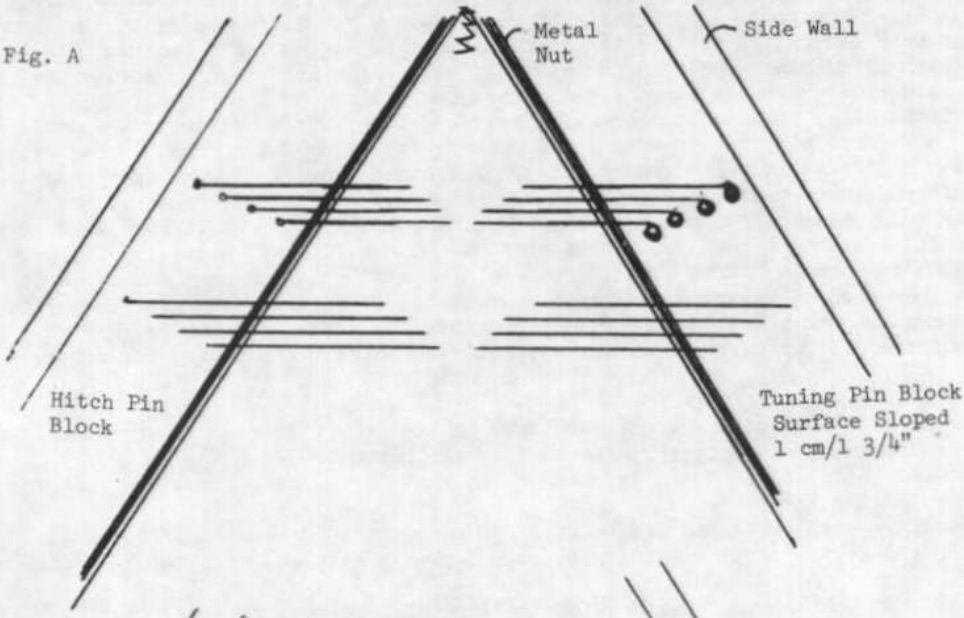
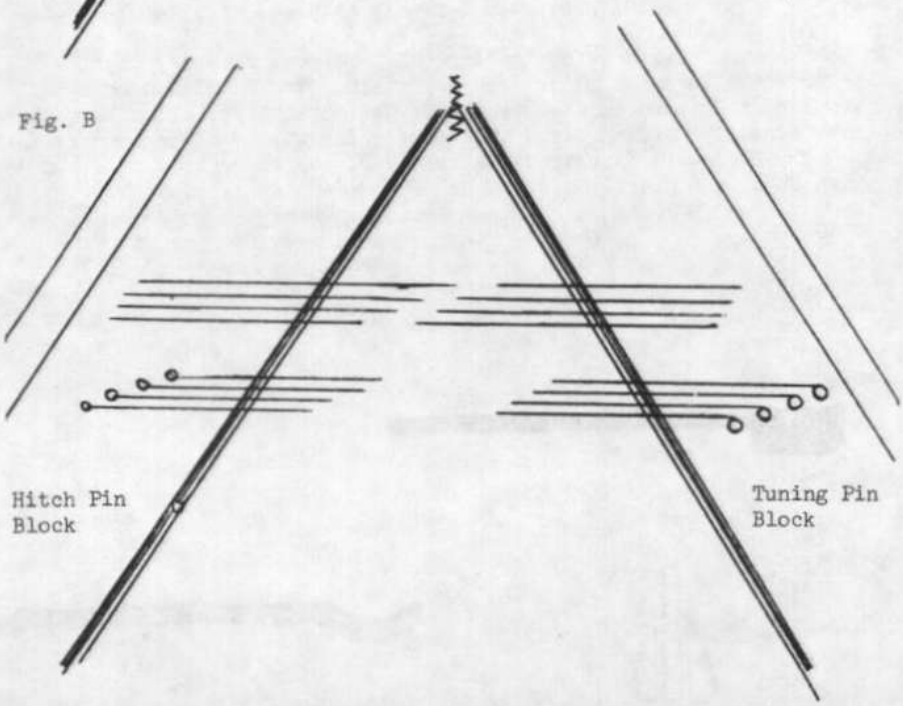


Fig. B



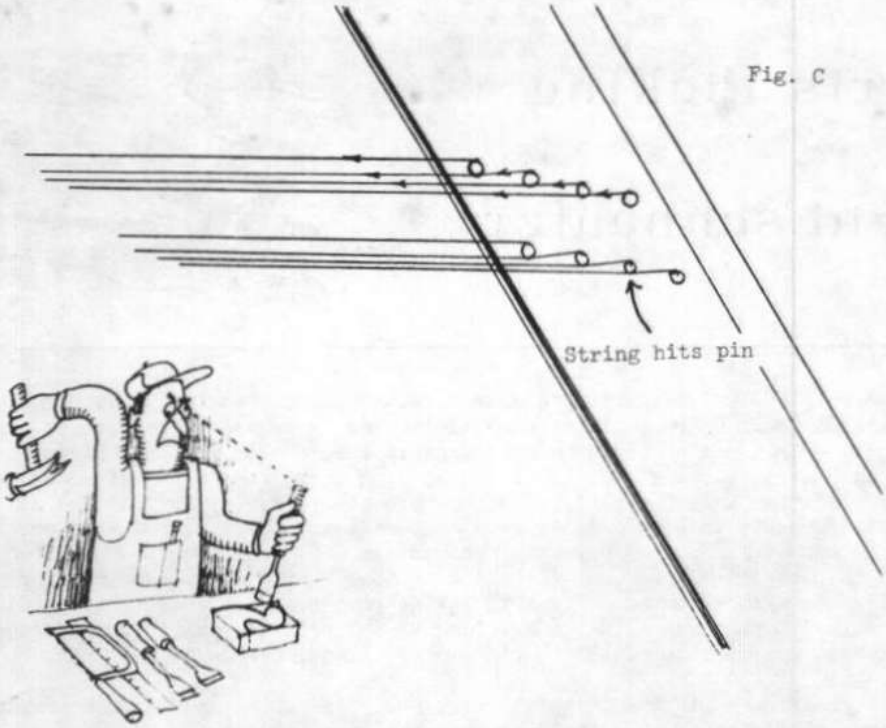


Fig. C

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Harris Picking

david schnaufer

In the Fall of 1977, my friend Rodger Harris from Oklahoma City, author of NOTES ON DULCIMER MAKING (Bois D'Arc Publications) visited me in Texas and enlightened me to a dulcimer technique that has opened up a new range of sound color on the instrument. I refer to it now as "Harris picking", as he is the leading proponent of the style and I have never seen anyone from the East Coast to the West who has used it before. At the 1978 National Dulcimer Championship in Winfield, Kansas, he took third place with a most beautiful rendition of "Starr of the County Down" in this unique style.

Prior to his visit I had been listening to the Chieftain's albums and Derek Bell's harp playing was a focal point. I was trying to play this harp music on my dulcimer, but was ending up with too many slides and movements on the melody strings that detracted from the single note punctuality of the harp's sound. Rodger changed all of that in a matter of minutes.

This three finger picking technique works only if you are tuned to where the melody string(s) and middle string are tuned to the same note, such as in DAA Ionian and EAA Mixolydian or any of the four separate string tunings such as DADD Mixolydian or EBAA Dorian ("Starr of the County Down"). Instead of playing ascending or descending scales on the melody string alone and sliding to the next note up or down, you use the melody and middle string(s) alternately, fretted one space apart so you keep a plucked single note sound going.

Following is an exercise that will take you up and down the scale. Start slowly to get the feel of what's happening, then work up your speed. Once you've gotten the exercise down, try my version of "White Cockade" which is based on this technique. Other tunes I play in this style are "South Wind" and "Morgan Magan". I'm sure there are many other tunes which will take on a very special character when Harris-picked.

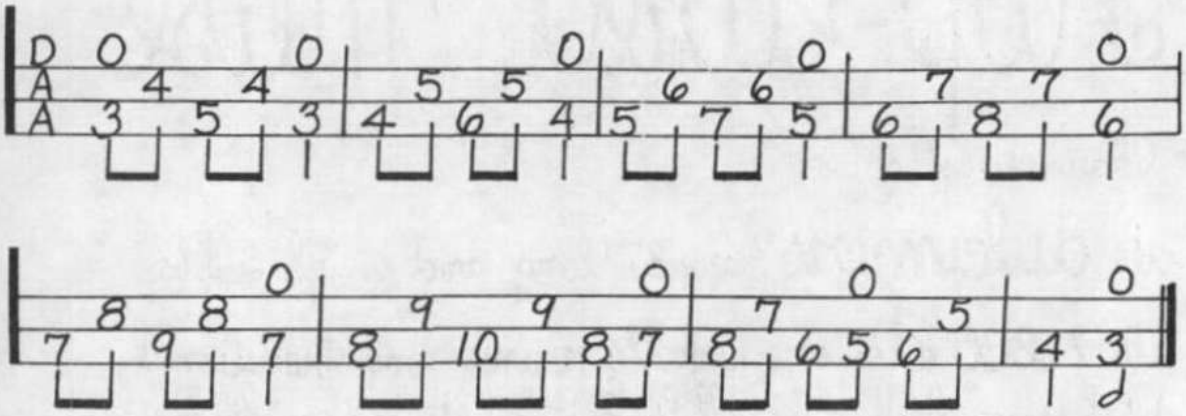
David Schnaufer
Boulder, Colorado

HARRIS PICKING FINGER EXERCISE

Tune: Do Sol Sol
D A A Ionian

by David Schnaufer

Meter: 3/4



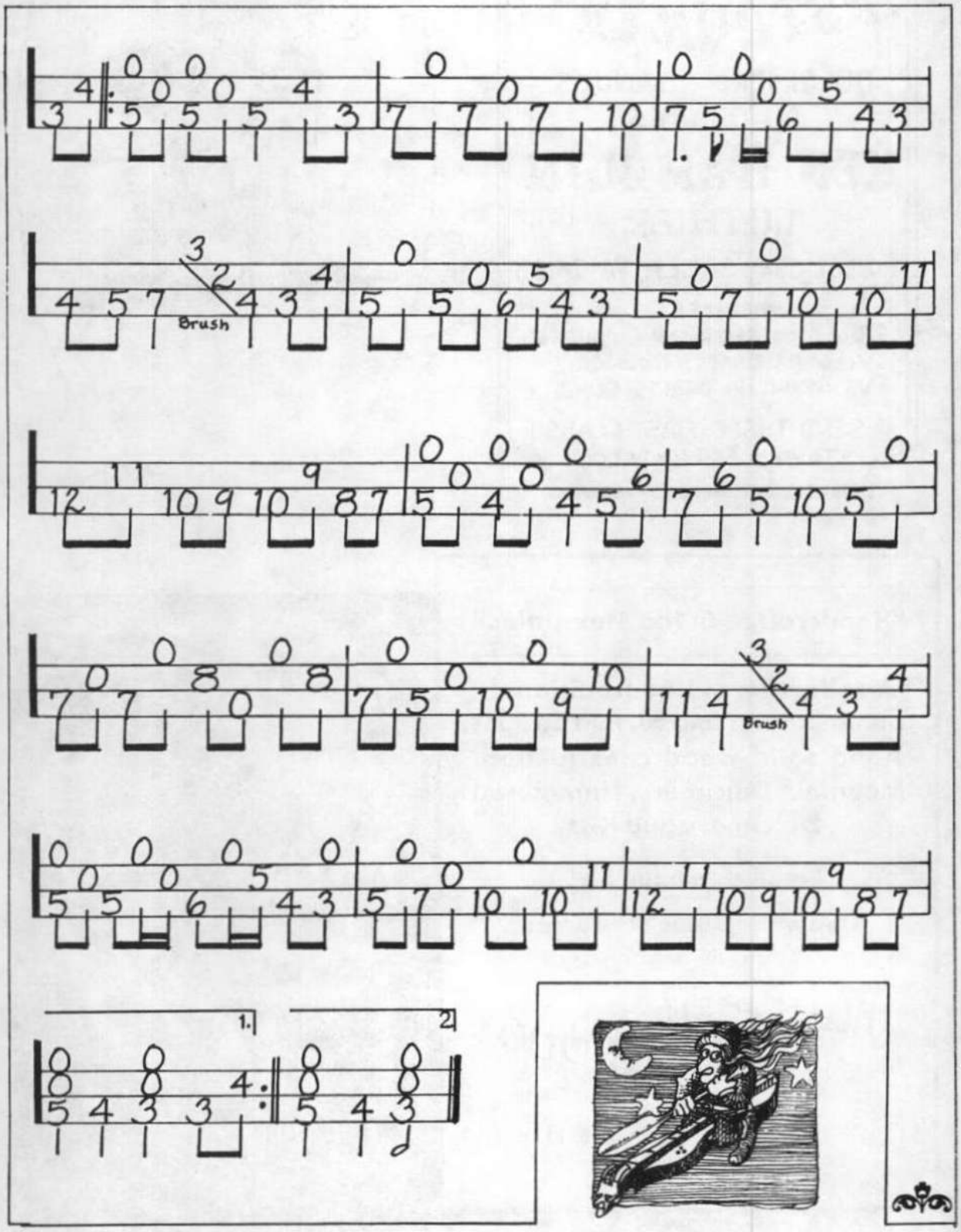
THE WHITE COCKADE

Using Harris Picking

Tune: Do Sol Sol
D A A Ionian

Meter: 4/4

arr. by David Schnaufer
tablature by Bonnie Carol
and David Schnaufer



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mini music lesson: ties and slurs

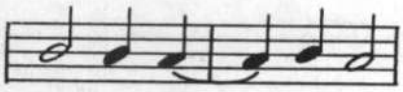
A tie is a curved line connecting two successive notes of the same pitch, thereby uniting them into a single sound. Sometimes the tie connects two notes separated by a bar line (see figure 1); other times the tie produces values that cannot be indicated by a single note (see figure 2). Don't be confused by a slur, which is also a curved line connecting notes. The slur indicated a group of notes are to be played smoothly (or legato) or with one syllable when singing. How can you tell a tie and a slur apart? The tie will connect notes of the SAME PITCH. The slur will conect notes of DIFFERENT PITCHES.

Ties and slurs can be found in "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" in this issue of DULCIMER PLAYERS NEWS. The last note of the 4th measure is tied to the first note of the 5th measure, the last note of the 9th measure is tied to the first note of the 10th measure and the last note of the 16th measure is tied to the first note of the 17th measure. Other notes in the song are slurred, all of them found in the "alto" part (the notes right under the melody). In the 4th measure, the 2nd note in the alto part (stems down) is slurred to the 3rd note (see, different pitches). If you were singing the alto part, both notes would use the same syllable. The same thing happens with the 2nd and 3rd notes in the 9th measure, the 2nd and 3rd note in the 16th measure, and the 4th note in the 16th measure is slurred to the 1st note in the 17th measure. To help you, we've numbered the measures in the song! Look for the slurred notes in "Away in a Manger".

A special note to dulcimer players: Often the player continues to strum through tied notes when the music moves quickly, thereby preventing some "dead spots". You will find this situation with the tied notes in "Drone on my Knee". However, "Lo, How a Rose E're Blooming" should be played with one strum per chord at a slow to moderate speed, and the tied chords should be observed.

Madeline MacNeil

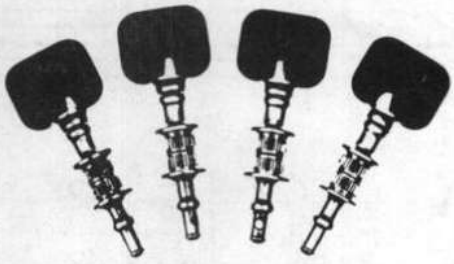
Fig. 1



A quarter note is tied to a quarter note on the other side of the bar line. In 4/4 time a quarter note gets one beat. The total value of the tied quarter notes is two beats.

Fig. 2

Assume we are in 4/4 time. There is no one note to indicate 2 1/2 beats. Therefore, a half note (2 beats) is tied to an eighth note (1/2 beat), making a total value of 2 1/2 beats.



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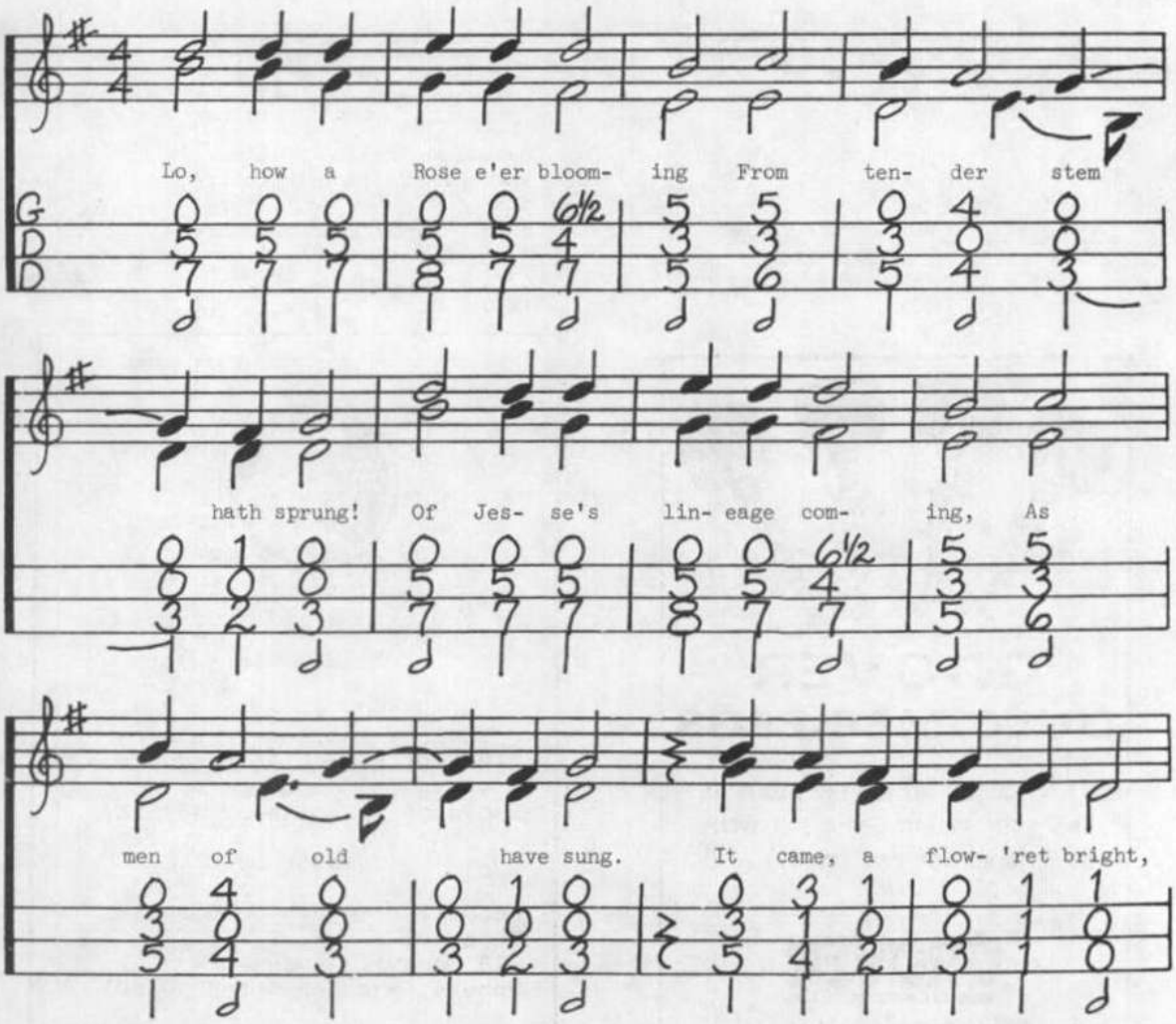
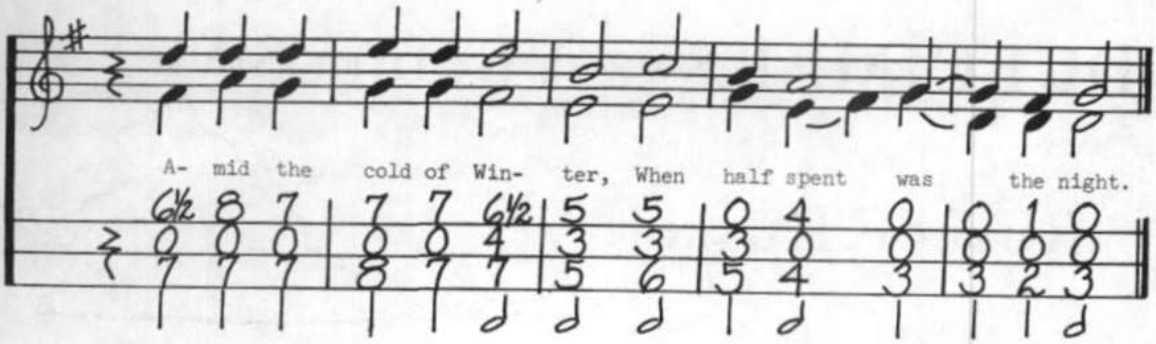
Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming

Traditional German
Translation: Theodore Baker, 1894
Tune: Ionian (Do Sol Sol)

Kolner Gesangbuch, 1599
Harmonization: Michael Praetorius, 1609
Dulcimer Arrangement: Lorraine Lee





1. Es ist ein' Ros' entsprungen
   Aus einer Wurzel zart,
   Wie uns die Alten sungen,
   Aus Jesse kam die Art,
   Und hat ein Blümlein bracht
   Mitten im kalten Winter,
   Wohl zuder halben Nacht.

2. Das Röslein, das ich meine,
   Davon Isaias sagt,
   Hat uns gebracht alleine
   Marie, die reine Magd.
   Aus Gottes ew'gem Rat
   Hat sie ein Kind geboren,
   Wohl zu der halben Nacht.

3. Das Blümelein, so kleine,
   Das duftet uns so süss;
   Mit seinem hellen Scheine
   Vertreibt's die Finsternis;
   Wahr' Mensch un wahrer Gott,
   Hilft uns aus allen Leiden,
   Rettet von Sünd' und Tod.

2. Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
   The Rose I have in mind,
   With Mary we behold it,
   The Virgin Mother kind.
   To show God's love aright,
   She bore to men a Savior
   When half-spent was the night.

3. This Flow'r whose fragrance tender
   With sweetness fills the air,
   Dispels with glorious splendor
   The darkness ev'rywhere.
   True man, yet very God;
   From sin and death He saves us,
   And lightens ev'ry load.

Michael Praetorius (ca. 1571-1621) composed Masses and other sacred works, including motets in Latin and German. He also wrote secular polyphony and instrumental dances. He was the author of an important treatise in three parts, SYNTAGMA MUSICUM (1614-19). One part of the treatise contained discussion and illustrations of instruments.

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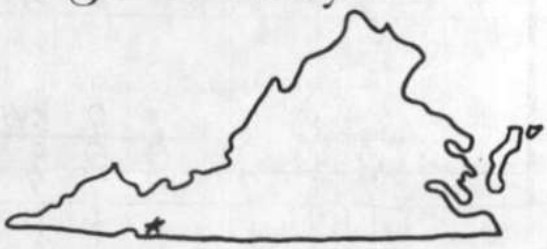
DULCIMERS: Virginia Style!

Roscoe Russell



In southwestern Virginia, in the high mountains of Grayson and Carroll counties, they build and play plucked dulcimers in an altogether different manner than those most of us are familiar with. In this general five-state intersection where the plucked dulcimer is thought to have originated, an indication of its former mountainous isolation lies in the fact that Jean Ritchie of Viper, Kentucky, 100 miles away from Galax as the crow flies, never heard this style of playing, and the Virginians never heard Jean's style, which we now accept as traditional. Because of this uniqueness, at least two Galax dulcimers are on display in the collection at the Smithsonian History and Technology Museum in Washington, D. C.

If you have heard "The Russell Family" record (County 734), you know the traditional sound of the Galax dulcimer. Its shape, its construction, the tuning of its four strings, and the manner in which it is played are all unique to the Virginia highlands region. Unlike most plucked dulcimers, it is very large and deep, although its string length is only 25 inches. It has a double bottom so that its volume is not diminished by playing it on the lap or a table. The inner bottom is a solid, integral part of the sound box. The outer bottom, of the same shape, is attached with small blocks of wood glued at intervals around its periphery, with spaces between for the sound to escape. The center structural member, whose edge forms the fretboard, looks for all the world like a 2x4, but it is contoured and hollow, and does not extend into the sound box. Internal "ribs" attached to this "backbone" provide great strength to the instrument.

All four equally-spaced strings are tuned to the same note, usually D above middle C. Like bagpipe tuning, which differs only in having a bass string tuned an octave below the others, both Mixolydian (starting on the open string) and Ionian (third fret) modes can be played without retuning, each in a different key. While the Galax folks don't do it, dropping the two melody strings one tone similarly permits Aeolian and Dorian modes in two keys without retuning. It would be possible, obviously, to re-string the instrument to play in the common tunings, but the uniqueness and regional sound would be lost.

The Galax dulcimer is played with the small end of a wild turkey feather from which the barbs (feathery part) have been removed with a sharp knife, razor blade, or scissors and sandpaper. The end is trimmed back to a point where the tip is about a sixteenth of an inch in diameter. Cut, don't strip the barbs off; this takes two pieces of the shaft with it and weakens the feather. The shaft is very tough and flexible, and lasts almost forever if not broken. Breaking only occurs if the feather is struck accidentally on the side of the high fretboard, and even then, the song can be finished out by sliding the hand down below the crease. The length of feather between the hand and the strings is usually between two and five inches, depending on the volume level desired.

Playing the instrument Galax-style involves "noting" the nearest two strings and droning the other two. The feather length lends speed to the strumming, so that a combination of wrist and elbow action easily permits very fast strumming indeed. As a result, most tunes played on the instrument in the Galax area are fiddle tunes, and most of the "licks" typical of local playing styles are patterned after fiddle styles. The high pitch and two-note chords blend extremely well with rhythm guitar and bass. On "The Russell Family" record, Roscoe Russell adds a magnificent baritone ukelele countermelody to many of his daughter Bonnie's dulcimer melodies, and son Roy fills out the low end with fine rhythm guitar which accents the lower notes a bass might otherwise play. Until recently, only Galax dulcimer tuning and playing styles gave a contestant any chance of winning a ribbon at the Galax and Independence, Virginia fiddlers conventions. In 1978, for perhaps the first time, a "conventional" five-string plucked dulcimer played in a most unconventional style (pseudo-NBC tuning and bluegrass-banjo-style finger-picking) took first place in the Galax contest, although the other four winners played Galax dulcimers in the Galax style.

Woody Padgett
Springfield, Virginia

Audrey Miller

I had the pleasure of meeting Audrey Miller during the harsh Winter of 1978 in the home of her father, Albert Hash. Mr. Hash is a fine craftsman of fiddles and is an old-time fiddle player. Audrey has been making dulcimers since she was about 17 years old.

Audrey told us an interesting story of how she got the pattern for the style of dulcimer she currently makes. "This log house had been torn down over in North Carolina and the family that had lived there had a record of this dulcimer back 200 years and it had been brought from Scotland. Anyway, the dulcimer was lost for 50 years and they thought that it had been stolen. When they tore the house down the dulcimer was found wedged between the ceiling and the wall. At the time, there happened to be a man there who knew us. He brought me the dulcimer and stayed with it while I made pictures and drew up my patterns to make it.

"The thing was so old, and a mouse had eaten out the sound hole and fell down in it and was rattlin' around in there. It played such beautiful music and was such an expert job, considerin' the man probably didn't have many tools at the time it was made. I've been making this pattern ever since.

"I had watched Dad make fiddles all my life and I decided I wanted to make something. He decided that the dulcimer would be the thing to start me out on since I had no knowledge of woodwork other than just watching him. I borrowed a dulcimer from a fellow who lived across the hill from us that his father had made. It was about a hundred years old at the time. It was the teardrop shape with a very blunt handle. Dad more or less hunted up some wood for me and left me to do it. It was so rough and crude, but it played and I guess that inspired me to make others. I've made close to a hundred now and I'd never done anything with wood before."

Audrey especially wanted to share information about her methods in making a dulcimer. Each piece is sawed down to 1/4 inch and then sanded down to exactly 1/8 inch all over, using calipers to measure. The sides are 2 3/4 inches deep, to give more volume, and liners are cut from the same wood that the rest of the dulcimer is made. The fingerboard is hollowed out with three holes down the fretboard. Soundholes are usually "f" or heart-shaped. She always puts a handle on each dulcimer and often carves a head of a lady, horse or dragon on the headstock by using a pocket knife.

Her favorite wood is walnut, "the older the better". She speaks of three different sounds - a loud, tough sound, a willowy, lilting sound and the one she strives for, "a good in-between, to get the sweet dulcimer sound and the good solid tone. The old dulcimers I have played had a good cross between the nice sweet tone and the hard, good volume because they were played with fiddles and guitars and a whole band."

Audrey works a lot of her personality into the instruments she makes. "Each instrument is made one at a time with particular attention to that one dulcimer. I like to make an instrument with a particular person in mind, an instrument I'd like to keep for myself. I'm not the best dulcimer maker in the world but I do get a kick out of it. What I lack in skill, I've got in enthusiasm."

Audrey works in her father's workshop about forty miles from Galax, Virginia on White Top Mountain using tools made by him.

Phyllis Gaskins

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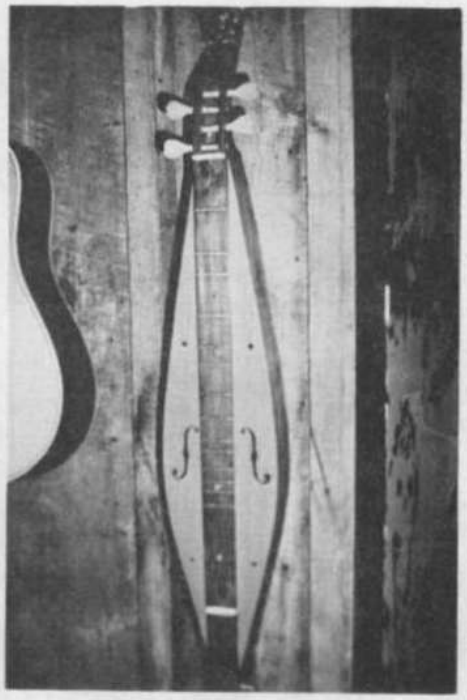
(left)
Audrey Miller
Route 2, Box 119
Mouth of Wilson, VA 24363

(lower left)
Dulcimer built by
Audrey Miller

(lower right)
Roscoe Russell
RFD 1, Box 108A
Fancy Gap, VA 24328

Audrey Miller photographs
by Woody Padgett

Roscoe Russell photograph
by Pat Appino



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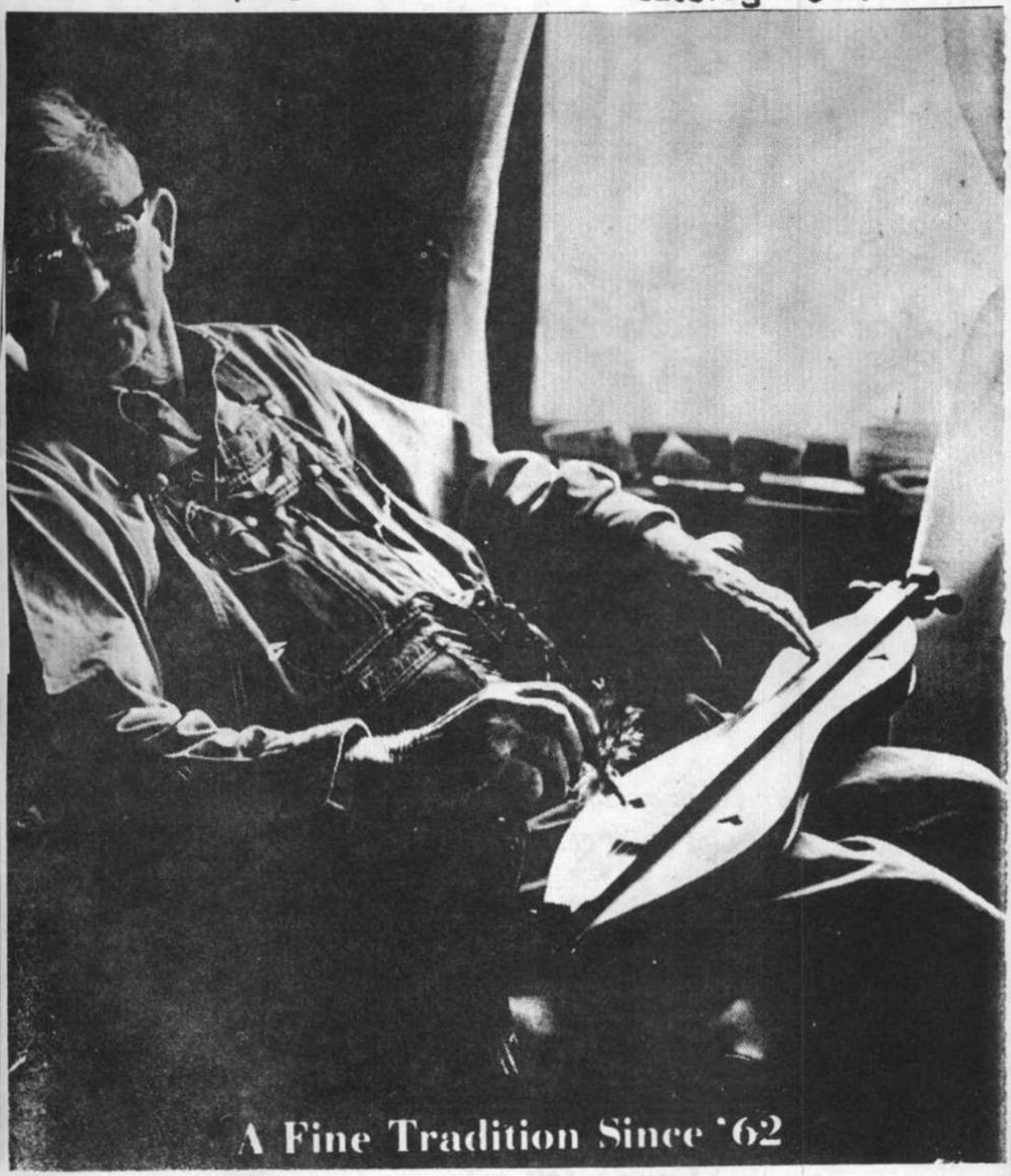

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The Winter 1980 DULCIMER PLAYERS NEWS will included pictures and stories about the 1979 dulcimer festivals. Listed below, however, are the winners from some dulcimer contests this Summer. More about the festival good times later.

Lewisburg College Folk Music
and Dance Festival
Lewisburg, North Carolina
March 30-31, 1979

Mountain Dulcimer

1st Carrie Crompton (NC)
2nd Sharon Shelburne (VA)

National Mountain Dulcimer Contest
Winfield, Kansas
June 1-3, 1979

1st Mark Nelson (UT)
2nd Larkin Bryant (TN)
3rd Tom Haver (CO)

Independence Blue Grass and
Old-Time Fiddler's Convention
Independence, Virginia
June 29-30, 1979

1st Jonathon Padgett (VA)
2nd Bonnie Pennington (NC)
3rd Jim Burcham (VA)
4th Raymond Melton (VA)
5th Sharon Shelburne (VA)
Best All-Around Performer Alan Freeman

Bob Evans Farms Dulcimer Festival
Rio Grande, Ohio
July 21-22, 1979

Solo Dulcimer Instrumental - Female

1st Sharon Greenwood (OH)
2nd Martha Ward (OH)
3rd Eunice Pennill (WV)

Solo Dulcimer Instrumental - Male

1st. Alan Freeman (WV)
2nd Bruce Knarr (OH)
3rd Dana Vibberts (OH)

Childrens Competition

1st Lylia Waltrip (OH)
2nd Kelly Rusk (OH)

Courting Dulcimer

1st Dana & Cathi Vibberts (OH)
2nd Kenneth & Martha Ward (OH)

Hammered Dulcimer

1st Becky Burns (OH)
2nd Ross Moore (WV)

Female Vocal w/Dulcimer

1st Debbie Kopp (OH)
2nd Barb Willey (OH)
3rd Marilyn Waltrip (OH)

Male Vocal w/Dulcimer

1st Dana Vibberts (OH)
2nd Alan Freeman (WV)
3rd J. D. LaBash (OH)

Duet or Mixed Dulcimer

1st Alan Freeman (WV) and J. D. LaBash (OH)
2nd Mark & Marilyn Waltrip & Bruce Knarr (OH)
3rd Debbie Kopp & Ed Simpkins (OH)

Grand Champion Competition

Alan Freeman (WV)

44th Old Fiddlers Convention
Galax, Virginia
August, 1979

Mountain Dulcimer

1st Alan Freeman (WV)
2nd Kit Connaway (VA)
3rd Sharon Shelburne (VA)
4th Woody Padgett (VA)
5th Keith Young (VA)

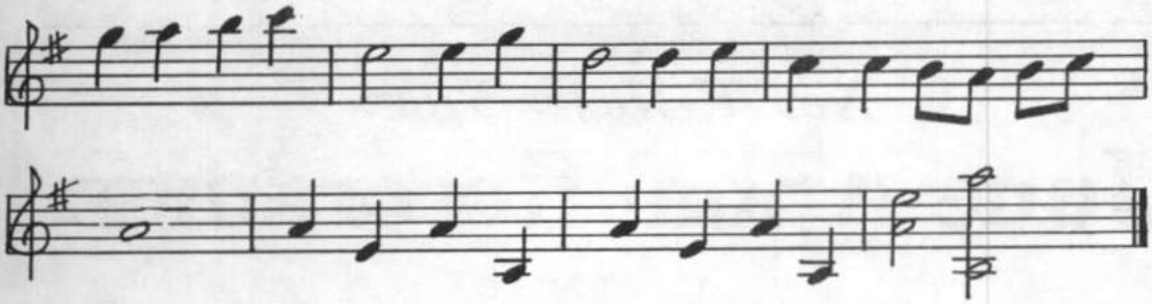
Cover Photograph

Neal Hellman is a long-time friend of the DULCIMER PLAYERS NEWS, sharing tablatures and playing ideas. He is the author of LIFE IS LIKE A MOUNTAIN DULCIMER and DULCIMER SONGBOOK and is one of the performers on the album PACIFIC RIM DULCIMER PROJECT.

What's Ahead? The Winter 1980 DPN promises pictures and stories of the 1979 dulcimer festivals, a legend in which the dulcimer plays an important part, an article on performing plus dulcimer arrangements by Fred Meyer, Ron Ewing and others. If your subscription expires with the Fall issue, renew before it slips your mind. We're sure you won't want to miss the Winter issue.

CAROLAN'S FAREWELL TO MUSIC

TURLOGH CAROLAN
Transcribed by CARRIE CROMPTON



This version of Carolan's "Farewell to Music" was transcribed from a tape of W. B. Yeat's daughter-in-law playing Celtic harp in a performance at North Carolina State University in Raleigh a few years ago. "Farewell to Music" was the last piece written by the harpist Turlogh Carolan shortly before his death at age 68. Derek Bell (of the Chieftans) recorded "Farewell to Music" on his album CAROLAN'S RECEIPT (Claddagh CC18). The piece is famous for its freedom of phrasing and accent, and it does not take kindly to being scrunched into 4/4 time.

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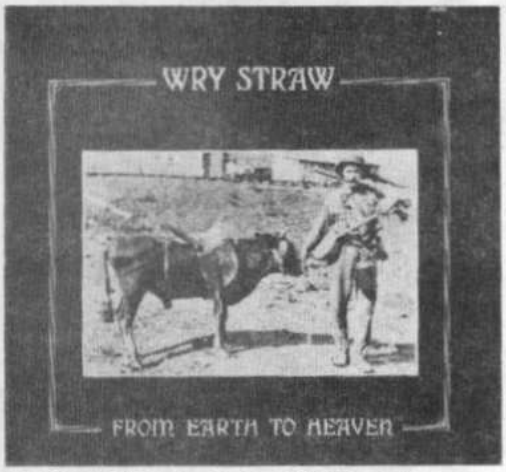

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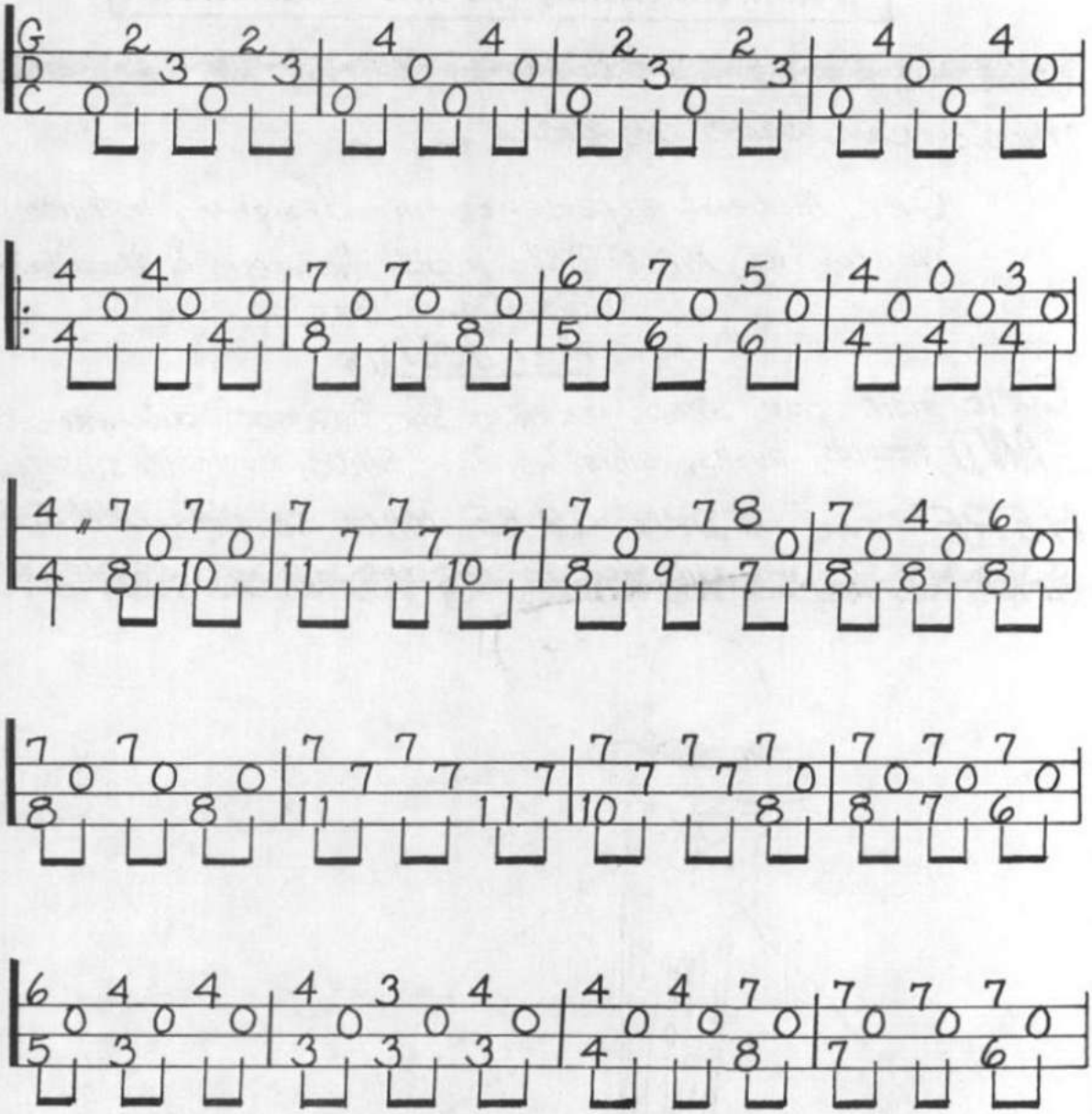

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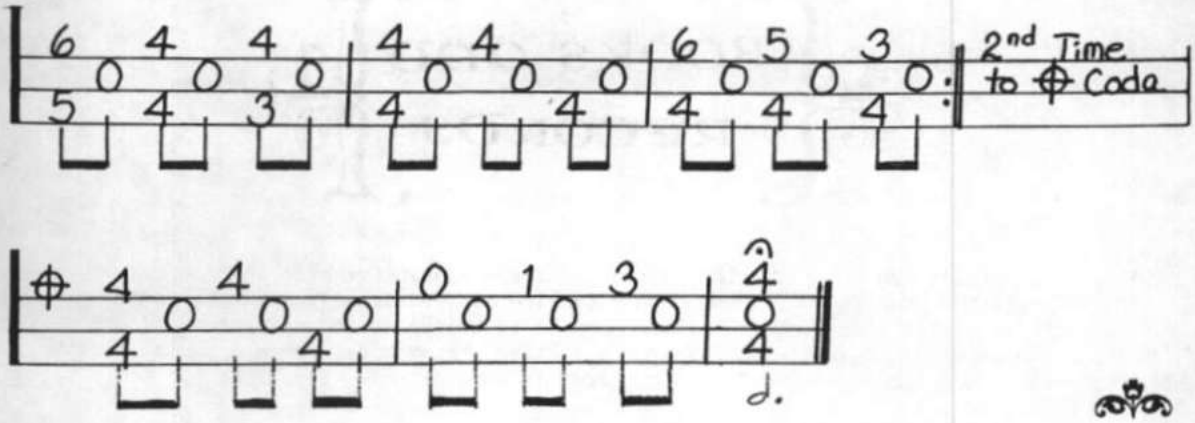

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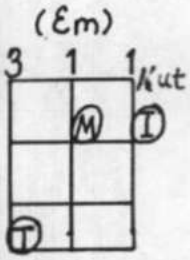

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The DPN is published four times each year. Issues (approximately 44 pages in length) are mailed to subscribers during the first week of January, April, July and October. Subscriptions are $6 per year. Individual current and back issues are $1.50 each.

Madeline MacNeil, Editor

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